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Mrs Livingstone  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Livingstone

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 31 January 2007 to look at work in English.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit had a particular focus on our current survey theme: provision for poetry.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but they will not be identified in the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are good.

- Pupils enter the school with attainment which is broadly in line with national expectations.
- By the end of Year 2, standards are above average, particularly in reading, and pupils make good progress.
- In Key Stage 2, standards have been broadly in line with the national average but are improving. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress between Year 2 and Year 6.

- Pupils' progress in the lessons observed was good. The school's assessment data and the sample of work indicate that Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve results which are above the national average.
- Recent strategies to improve writing, along with a strong focus on speaking and listening, have led to improvements in achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.

### Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is good.

- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly. They have good subject knowledge and manage classes well, with good relationships.
- Teachers use a good range of activities and pupils respond well, especially in pair or group work. However, opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas at greater length are not always taken and plenary sessions remain weak.
- Poetry is taught well.
- Teachers' marking is thorough, relates to the key objectives of the task and provides pupils with relevant advice on how to improve their work. Pupils are given clear targets which they use effectively.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is good.

- There is a good range of topics with balanced representation across different texts, genres and forms of writing. Drama, speaking and listening are also well covered. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and detailed logs are maintained by pupils and checked by teachers and parents.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to write for real purposes and audiences, including the house poetry books, letters and reports.
- The curriculum is supported by a good range of activities and events including a school production, poetry performance and theatre visits.
- There is a very full programme of support for pupils with particular needs.

### Leadership and management in English

The leadership and management of English are good.

- Strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance have been carefully analysed and appropriate action taken to improve achievement.
- Action plans are clear and well focused on key priorities with relevant training provided for staff.
- Systems for monitoring provision in English are thorough and used to refine action plans and priorities.

- There is good communication between staff, including teaching assistants.
- Strategies to improve achievement, especially in writing, are beginning to have effect as demonstrated in the sample of work provided. However, pupils are not always expected to draft or edit their writing.

### Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Poetry is well covered in the curriculum and also forms part of the wider approach to literacy in the school, for example through the compilation of house poetry anthologies.
- Pupils enjoy the poetry that they have studied, especially where they can perform the work of others or their own writing.
- Poetry is used in a variety of ways such as to stimulate personal writing and to explore topics and themes. The house poetry books were used as a vehicle for getting older pupils to work alongside younger ones with significant success. This was also the case in the use of performance poems during anti-bullying week.
- Teachers use a good range of strategies to teach poetry, regularly involving active learning. In one lesson, the teacher went into role to answer questions from pupils before they began a piece of reflective writing. In another, pupils shared the reading aloud of a dialect poem before moving on to explore ways to read another poem aloud.

### Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Assessment data are used effectively to identify pupils promptly for the various intervention programmes. School data shows that all groups of pupils make similar rates of progress.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and provides work at different levels in all classes. Teaching assistants are used effectively to work with groups and this is included in the planning.
- Provision for pupils with a range of needs is good; this includes activities to support pupils in phonics, reading and writing.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- provide pupils with opportunities to talk at length, to explain and justify their ideas, for example after talking to their learning partners
- improve plenary sessions by enabling teachers to assess pupils' progress
- ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to draft and edit their writing, for example after timed activities.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
Her Majesty's Inspector